



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBUCKLE
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

TWO INDICTED ON DRUG AND WEAPONS CHARGES RELATED TO POT CULTIVATION IN TONTO NATIONAL FOREST

PHOENIX-- A federal grand jury in Phoenix Wednesday returned a six count indictment against Alejandro Mendoza-Angiano, 20, and Jesus Manuel Sanchez-Gonzalez, 28, both of the Republic of Mexico for violations of Conspiracy to Cultivate more than 1,000 Marijuana Plants, Cultivation of more than 1,000 Marijuana Plants, Using a Firearm During and in Relation to a Drug Trafficking Crime, Assault on a Federal Law Enforcement Officer with a Deadly Weapon, Using a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence, and Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm.

The indictment alleges that Mendoza-Angiano and Sanchez-Gonzalez were cultivating more than 1,000 marijuana plants in the Maple Springs Draw area of the Tonto National Forest. Mendoza-Angiano is charged with using a .223 caliber Ruger Mini-14 assault rifle during and in relation to the marijuana cultivation activities as well as to threaten or intimidate a United States Forest Service Officer who was investigating the marijuana cultivation crimes. Mendoza-Angiano is also charged with possessing a firearm while being in the United States unlawfully. Both defendant's are detained pending further proceedings in the case.

Convictions for Conspiracy to Cultivate more than 1,000 marijuana plants and Cultivation of more than 1,000 marijuana plants each carry a maximum penalty of Life in prison, a \$4,000,000 fine or both. A conviction for Assault on a Federal Law Enforcement Officer with a Deadly Weapon carries a maximum penalty of 20 years, a \$250,000.00 fine or both. Convictions for Using a Firearm During and in Relation to a Drug Trafficking Crime and Using a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence each carry a maximum penalty of Life in prison consecutive to any other sentence, a \$250,000.00 fine or both. A conviction for being an Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm carries a maximum penalty of 10 years, a \$250,000.00 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, the assigned United States District Judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the United States Forest Service, the Gila County Sheriff's Department, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, and the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The prosecution is being handled by Glenn McCormick, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-0993-PHX
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